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CHILD WELFARE

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
A Statement by Mr. Mayo	3
Dilemmas Faced in Planning for the Child Needing Special Foster Care	4
The State Welfare Department's Responsibility for Investigation of Adoption Petitions	8
What the State Department of Public Welfare Can Offer Children Either Directly or Through Child-Caring Institutions	14
A Time Study of Homefinding	16
First Annual Mary E. Boretz Awards Given	17
Book Notes	17
Classified Ad Service	19

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A STATEMENT BY MR. MAYO

AS retiring President of the Child Welfare League, it is my happy duty to introduce the new President and other new Board Members.

The close association that I have enjoyed with the Board, the staff, and the League's member agencies during my tenure as President will remain as one of the happiest and most rewarding experiences of my life. We have worked together for important objectives; we have known the disappointments of failure and the lift of success; we have grown together, and you have added immeasurably to my knowledge and perspective, and to my faith in what may eventually be accomplished for the children and youth of America.

It has been my privilege as Secretary and then President of the League's Board to work intimately with its three full-time directors, C. C. Carstens, Howard Hopkirk and Spencer Crookes. I am grateful to each of them for the opportunity to share in the leadership of the League; and to the League's staff members who have been an inspiration I want to express my respect and admiration.

* * * *

The election of Marshall Field III of Chicago and New York City as the eleventh President of the Child Welfare League of America has met with enthusiastic acclaim.

Not only has the League designated a distinguished citizen known throughout the country for his many and useful activities in child welfare, but for the first time the Presidency of the League is held by a lay person in the field of social work. This is a sound development. The Board is composed at present of about two-thirds volunteer and one-third professional representation, due to the effective planning of the League's committees on nominations; and the fact that an outstanding layman has now become President is both logical and wise.

The greatest value to the League in Mr. Field's election lies, however, in the man himself. Business leader, journalist, and humanitarian of broad interests, Mr. Field has long been identified with child welfare. In the summer of 1940 he founded and took a leading part in directing the U. S. Committee for the Care of European Children, whose function it was to bring to this country from England for temporary foster care children who were threatened by the air raids on the British Isles.

Other child welfare interests of Mr. Field's include the Wiltwyck School in Wiltwyck, New York, for problem children; the Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society, a member agency of the League, of

which Mr. Field is a director; and the Marshall Field Foundation, which he founded in 1940 and through which significant contributions to child welfare have been made during the last decade.

Mr. Field will bring to the League a broad knowledge of child welfare programs and problems, a progressive view, and a commitment to children matched by few men and women in the United States. The retiring President bespeaks for him the full backing and support of the Board, the staff and the entire membership.

The League is equally fortunate in welcoming to its Board at this time other distinguished persons who were elected at the Annual Meeting of the Board at Atlantic City on Tuesday afternoon, May 15th. The full slate of officers elected at Atlantic City appears on the back cover of this issue.

Mr. George A. Newbury of Buffalo was elected Vice-President. He is a former President of the Children's Aid and Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children of Erie County, a League member agency, to which he has given distinguished service. Among other civic responsibilities he is a member of the advisory board of the Children's Hospital and Chairman of its fund-raising campaign, and a trustee of the Community Chest of Buffalo and Erie County.

Five new members were elected to the Board of Directors. The Rev. Jesse F. Anderson has been an active board member of the League's member agency, Children's Services, Inc., of Philadelphia, for a number of years and is now its President. He served on most of the important committees of that agency, making his leadership felt throughout the community.

Dr. Leona Baumgartner, pediatrician, is Assistant Commissioner of the New York City Department of Health, and in that capacity directs the Department's health services for mothers and children, as well as school health services. She has been with the Department since 1937. Until her appointment as Assistant Commissioner in 1948, she was Director of the Bureau of Child Hygiene. During 1949 and 1950 she was Associate Director of the United States Children's Bureau. She continues to function as Consultant to the Children's Bureau.

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. John B. Butler is President of the Catholic Charities of St. Louis, a League member agency. He has been President of the National Conference of Catholic Charities. For years he has been active on the Board of the Missouri State Conference and given outstanding leadership in community organizations.

Mrs. Randolph Guggenheimer established the Day Care Council of New York City and is its Chairman. She has been an outstanding advocate of child welfare. Among other civic responsibilities, she is a member of the Board of the Educational Alliance and Chairman of its Child Care Committee; a member of the Citizens Committee on Children; Chairman of the Subcommittee on Rest and Reception Centers of the Emergency Welfare Committee for Child Welfare in New York City; and a member of the Child Care Committee of the Community Service Society.

Mr. Julius S. Rothman is Assistant to the Director

of the National C.I.O.'s Community Services Division, and its representative on the Labor Participation Committee, Community Chests and Councils of America. He brings to the League knowledge and experience in community organization and other aspects of social work.

The needs, the opportunities and the challenges of the present and future are great. I believe that the League, under its present leadership, is on the threshold of a new era; an era of greater development than it has yet known, of wider service, and of increased usefulness. I pledge my undivided and enthusiastic support in this common effort.

DILEMMAS FACED IN PLANNING FOR THE CHILD NEEDING SPECIAL FOSTER CARE*

Mrs. Elizabeth K. Radinsky

Director of Casework
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Brooklyn, N. Y.

What about the child whose needs cannot be met by either institutional or boarding home care? The writer examines the advantages and limitations of foster home care for children presenting various problems.

WHEN I began to write this paper something troubled me. Writing from the point of view of a foster home care agency perhaps there should be no dilemma! For was there not a time when we believed a foster home did exist for every child! That such a family home may exist for each child in need of foster care is difficult to dispute in the absolute. But, even if that were so, we know that realistically we cannot operate on such an assumption. Experience and our increasing psychological knowledge have taught us the significance of time in effecting adequate care for a child. We know how "waiting" may be even as damaging to the child as is an inadequate placement. We have no illusion regarding our powers to suspend "living" for the child while we find the proper foster home or facility. And so I was confronted by the question:—to what degree are the dilemmas we face due to ourselves, in not being able to give a service at the time it is needed, a service suitable for the children for whom we assume responsibility?

Many of our foster home placement agencies were born of the dilemma of institutions responsible for serving all children, yet unable to care for some. For example, children who suffered some physical handicap who needed more individualized care, the child who after an illness was discovered to have a cardiac

condition or malnutrition due to a serious feeding problem, that could not be taken care of in the institution. Then the difficulty of caring for very young children in a large, congregate setup led to their being "boarded out" until they became "of age" for the institution.

Gradually the concept that many children were "in need of a kindly family" who would undertake some of the "duties of natural parents" was developed, and culminated in the growing conviction that there were children who needed this kind of care, not just as an interim step to acquire eligibility for the institution.

Facilities Do Not Always Meet the Need

We have come to accept generally that the children who need foster home care are: the very young child (a "sine qua non"), the child needing long time care, the emotionally deprived child and the physically handicapped, ambulatory child. The appropriateness of foster home care is determined by their social situation and their resultant personal need. However, theoretical need often does not coincide with our actual ability to meet that need. We must look at our facility to determine whether it is a live and elastic one. For example: we avow that little children in need of placement should have the personalized care possible with foster family placement. Yet we have

* Presented at New York State Conference on Social Work, November, 1950.

not developed a foster home program that always meets this need at the time the child needs it, so that there often ensues protracted institutionalization of the young child, with its attendant serious consequences. Then, by the time he gets into a foster home, the child may well show not only the detrimental effects related to his separation and relationship or lack of relationship with his own family, but intensification of his problems related to the confusions of group living for the young child. So among these little ones for whom we desperately want individualized family care there are those who are too emotionally confused to take on such relationships immediately by the time they come to foster home care. The need was there, but the facility was not available till it was too late! In our own agency out of this dilemma came exploration and then the attempt to meet the needs of some of these children by supplementing foster home care with nursery school. We have found in the course of the last three years that out of 24 little children between the ages of three and five, all of whom came from deprived backgrounds and in varying ways showed how difficult it was for them to use the personalized, individualized foster home care, all but three were helped by the nursery care program not only in their adjustment in the foster home but also markedly in their personal development. For some, the nursery school program made it possible for the foster family to continue caring for them during a difficult and trying period. For others, where there was no threat of loss of foster home, the nursery school program aided their development decisively.

For example: We entered little Alice in nursery school when she was three and a half years old. She had come into our care when she was not quite two. She came from a very disturbed home setting, the youngest of five children. Although she had gained a good bit, physically, in the year and a half in our care, we were concerned with her retarded muscular and emotional development. Although she tested "dull-normal" there was question whether this was not related to emotional deprivation. The foster family was attached to her for the very reasons that we were concerned: because she was such a "baby," so piteous in appearance and clung so desperately to any adult.

Alice went to nursery school for almost two years. Her speech improved and there was improvement in her relationship with children and in her use of adults. Alice is still a high-strung girl but it has been possible for her to make a fairly good adjustment to regular school this year.

Sometimes, as already implied, a child is not helped by nursery school.

Marilyn was one of three whom nursery school did not help sufficiently. She was one of the first children for whom we tried the use of nursery school. This was some help to Marilyn in gaining some limited confidence in adults and it did stabilize her for quite a while in her first foster home. It was not, however, enough to help her overcome extreme temper tantrums and hostile, aggressive behavior which were factors in precipitating subsequent replace-

ments which in turn aggravated her behavior, her sense of insecurity, and feelings of not being wanted. Because she was so young, only five years old, we felt obligated to continue trying to help her. She was placed in what has since become a specialized, subsidized group foster home where her behavior was tolerated and accepted. Psychotherapy was given her over a period of eighteen months. Marilyn came to know this special foster home as one for troubled children who remained there until they were helped to be ready for a "usual" foster home and she actively participated in termination of her therapy and "readying" herself to join her sister in the latter's foster home. Through the use of the special home, psychotherapy and casework help, Marilyn showed tremendous improvement primarily in her capacity for more wholesome relationships with adults and children. We felt that her problems stemmed from her mother's marked rejection of her and preference for her older sister. As she worked through her own feelings about herself and experienced consistent acceptance, she became more acceptable to her mother. The prognosis for continued growth and development is favorable. Now, Marilyn has settled down to an "average child" instead of an agency dilemma.

Home Care Must At Times Be Supplemented

With Marilyn, perhaps because there was no other appropriate facility known to us, we felt constrained to find some way of helping her. There are, however, children who, although they need foster home care because of their development and emotional need, at a certain point need another kind of facility for a period. Sometimes it is a child like Jerry who is not threatened with loss of foster home, but with whose development in a foster home setting we are not satisfied.

Jerry came to us at the age of six from an infants' home where he had been for over three years. His father had previously deserted and his mother died in a mental hospital while he was in the infants' home. His foster family was utterly devoted to him but found difficulty accepting that he was of dull-normal intelligence. On the one hand they responded to his infantile behavior by treating him as a much younger child. On the other, once he started school they were disappointed in his lack of school achievement. By the time he was ten, not even tutoring was of sufficient help. He was not considered eligible for the class for retarded children; yet he was not able to take on the work in the regular class. He was aggressive with other children and was becoming a problem in the community even if not in the foster home. Our psychiatrist felt that he needed a period of time in a special institution organized and geared to the needs of children like himself and one that could help him in learning as well as in his relationships with children. Such a setting, we thought, might lessen the need for his infantile behavior and might be of help in furthering his impeded development.

Of course, a great deal of work had to be done with the foster family, who even at the end were reluctant participants in the plan. Throughout Jerry's stay in this special school there was continuous work with the foster family and contact with the agency caring for him. Jerry returned home at the end of the year. He did learn how to get along better with children. Some of his learning difficulties were overcome.

Jerry, now fifteen, is still immature for his age, but there has been consistent, slow development. The year's experience in the special institution gave him a sense of what he can do, so that it has been much easier for Jerry to accept his limited scholastic

ability. The foster family, too, learned to accept Jerry much more for what he really is than what they would like him to be. We are fortunate in that this foster home is as much Jerry's home as it can possibly be for a child in his status. We saw Jerry as undoubtedly needing foster home care as a long time plan, but also needing another facility for a period of time in view of his own lacks and deprivations.

There are other children like Jerry who need foster home care because the outlook for placement is of long duration. In themselves these children can take and use foster home care, but their parents are so threatened by it that subtly, or sometimes not so subtly, they destroy whatever value it holds. We have struggled to keep many such children in foster home care to the point where the service is no longer effective, and they become caught in the conflict of the agency which is sometimes shortsighted in its very concern for the child.

Thus far I have talked of children with emotional disturbances, some of whom can be cared for in the foster home with the aid of supplementary services, some who need an interim period in an institution with a special program, and some who in themselves can use foster home care but whose parent is less threatened by institutional care.

Care of Physically Handicapped Child

Now I want to discuss briefly the physically handicapped child who must have foster home care because of ineligibility for the institution based on his physical handicap. One of the assets of foster home care is its potential elasticity in the kinds of homes that may be available. It is understandable, as has already been stated, that the foster home care agency has been expected to provide care for the ambulatory physically handicapped child. We have generally accepted that care of such a child in a group setting might create problems both for him and for the administration. In our own agency we have accepted that placement of such a child is a valid demand of a foster home agency within the limits of that setting. We accept children with physical handicaps if they are such that care is possible within the confines of the foster home setting and for whom the community has facilities or for whom it is possible for us to supplement facilities.

Gertrude was such a child. She came to us fourteen years ago directly from the psychiatric division of a city hospital, where she had been admitted for diagnosis. She was not quite five years old, suffering from cerebral palsy—speech retarded, an ataxic gait with definite evidence of affected motor activity. Her mother had died and her father was overwhelmed in having to care for his crippled daughter. He was naturally overprotective and overly concerned. It was felt that foster home care with out-patient care at an orthopedic clinic where she could get physiotherapy and hydrotherapy with the agency arranging for special therapeutic dancing lessons might serve Gertrude's needs. She remained in her first foster home

for ten years, despite the difficult care entailed by her physical disability and abnormal appearance.

We were warned that adolescence would heighten problems and it did. It was at this time, at the age of fifteen, that Gertrude lost her original foster home. Her latent anxieties became full blown and resulted in a regression into infantilism and overdemanding behavior that the foster family could no longer tolerate. There followed several difficult short term placements. At about this time Gertrude was graduated from elementary school and there was difficulty getting vocational training. We had great difficulty in procuring direction as to how to guide Gertrude. Out of our own frustration we began to question whether we should continue caring for her. Other placement facilities, however, did not eventuate so we had to go on and we did find a foster home for her. With special tutoring which we provided, she became eligible for vocational training in an institute for the crippled and disabled. Then she achieved placement in a sheltered workshop, so that by now she is almost ready for employment in the open market.

Needless to say, the caseworker carries much of the credit for the sustaining and helping role she played throughout the period that Gertrude was experiencing an emotional crisis and in the help she gave so that Gertrude could take hold of her own resources.

Gertrude is now discharged from the agency, still living with her foster family and essentially is financially self-maintaining. She now has easy relationships with the unhandicapped person and has taken on responsibilities far beyond our expectations and prognosis. She accepts herself and is accepted by those around her.

As we look back, we feel reasonably gratified with our service to Gertrude. We learned much on the way with her. I mentioned Gertrude because there were many times midstream when we wavered in our conviction, questioned whether we should serve her. Because so much extra was demanded of us and of her, we sought other facilities which did not eventuate. I wonder whether it isn't good they did not.

Although physically handicapped children comprise only 3% of our population, each of them is very different in his handicap, and in the psychological effect of the handicap and the degree to which it intensifies problems related to his placement. However, there are those who can be served within our foster home setting psychologically as well as physically as long as the foster home itself is suitable for their emotional needs. In every case, service to the handicapped means some costly supplementation in special services, whether it be vocational or psychiatric help or a great deal of casework help.

When the physically handicapped child whom we can serve because of his physical handicap cannot emotionally take the foster home setting, then we are at an impasse.

When Andy was ten, his mother died of complications resulting from her diabetic illness. Andy himself was a serious diabetic. Previous to his mother's death, he had been able to administer insulin injections to himself. With his mother's death, he began to

deny his illness and would no longer do this. He refused to adhere to diet regulations and one could almost predict his going into shock by his arrogant disregard of diet restrictions.

Andy was angry at everybody but primarily with his father whom he suspected of rejecting him. And in truth the father did fear Andy in view of his diabetes. Andy was unable to accept that his father needed to place him because of concern related to his own inability to care for and manage Andy. Andy was in care with us for two and a half turbulent years. Although there were transitory glimmers of recognition that his foster mother cared for him, he could trust no one. Feeling rejected by his father, angry with his deceased mother, Andy could not take on anything akin to an emotional, personal relationship in the foster home. Nor could he take any real help from a caseworker or psychiatrist. We thought that a group setting might dissipate some of the pressures he felt and relieve some of the conflict in relation to his parents. There was no group facility for Andy. Even though the foster family were continuing to care for him with constant sustaining from us, we questioned whether foster home care was not intensifying his problems. In spite of very real factors making it difficult, we did work towards the goal of returning him to his father.

Andy has been home since the middle of the summer, broken into by a camp placement we purposely planned. Things are going fairly well—certainly Andy is not quite the angry, suspicious, almost wilfully self-destructive child he was. However, we question whether there is fundamental change, although there appears to be less suspiciousness of his father, who was able to take a good bit of help in overcoming his fear of Andy. Perhaps Andy will be able to get to a child guidance clinic soon. We wonder, however, had the community been able to provide him with a group setting, or our agency with a group foster home, whether Andy might not have been helped more decisively in placement.

In the beginning of placement, Andy's physical disability loomed large because of the difficulty of getting a foster mother ready to administer the insulin. However, we did not question serving him even in the face of this difficulty. It was only when, in the course of our work with him, we recognized that the psychological factors were such as to operate against the helpfulness of the foster home setting that we felt a greater service would be to help him get back home.

Problem of Seriously Disturbed Child

Because the foster home care agency can have elasticity and variation in its foster home structure, it is often expected to serve the child for whom there is no appropriate facility. I mean the seriously disturbed child who falls between the mental hospital and community resources. I dare say most of us in foster care have been called upon to give care to the seriously disturbed child who needs the kind of environmentally controlled treatment setting that cannot be provided in a foster home. Sometimes we have placed such children, particularly adolescents for whom no other facility has been provided. Sometimes we have

had the benefit of foster homes that could tolerate such youngsters. Sometimes it has meant frequent replacement for them. At best in such instances, the foster home has been a makeshift. We feel that we have done more harm to some in accepting them and failing to give them the kind of protection they needed. Perhaps if we did not attempt to offer them "stop-gap" service, the community might be more readily motivated by the pressure of need to develop an appropriate service.

I have tried to portray some of the difficult children we attempt to serve; I have tried to emphasize that we see the foster care setting as a basic structure that more often than not needs all kinds of supplementation. Needless to say, casework is an integral part of this basic structure. However, because of the large number of disturbed children we serve today, we may find that we have to provide even more in the way of supplementary services.

In view of our present governmental social security programs and our developing preventive services, it is to be expected that the number of children needing foster care may decrease. But those who do come into care come from seriously disturbed homes and show the resultant effects. So we need to think of how our use of the foster home care can be adapted and changed to meet needs of children we are called on to serve today.

We must examine carefully and objectively what makes for our dilemmas in serving certain children. Is lack of availability of the proper resource at the proper time a factor? Is hesitation to use another resource than our own a factor? Are we trying to meet the needs of children in 1950—with our 1950 knowledge—with appropriate policies and facilities? Do we see our use of foster home and institution facilities as fluid? Do we see them each as essentials in our present foster care setup, recognizing that at one point one facility may be appropriate, at another point in the life of the same child, a different facility may be needed?

Perhaps as we make maximum use of our facilities and our skills, and gear them constantly to the client's shifting needs, we may face less dilemma in serving some children and know better how to help our community recognize the need for developing specialized resources for others.

CONFERENCE

The Midwest Regional Conference will be held at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 21, 22, 23, 1951. Headquarters will be the Hotel Schroeder. Mr. Fred Delli-Quadri, Director, Division of Child Welfare and Youth Service, Wisconsin State Department of Public Welfare, is chairman.

THE STATE WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR INVESTIGATION OF ADOPTION PETITIONS*

Margaret Ward

Supervisor of Adoption Services
Division of Child Welfare
Florida State Welfare Board
Jacksonville, Florida

The difference between selecting a home for a child and investigating a home after placement means that the state department cannot provide as full protection for the child as do placement agencies. This article presents a challenging conception of what some of its broader responsibilities can be.

ADOPTION, heretofore considered only a small aspect of child welfare, is increasing by leaps and bounds. Whereas it is estimated that in 1934 approximately 16,000 petitions for adoption of children were filed, the figure had increased to 50,000 in 1944, and current estimates of the Children's Bureau now indicate that between 75,000 and 100,000 children are being adopted in this country each year.†

This marked increase in adoptions has been accompanied by widespread publicity directed to the general public and by a steady flow of books and articles written by and for social workers and members of other professions with the purpose of increasing knowledge and skills in respect to adoption. For the most part, the publicity in newspapers and popular magazines has been aimed at revealing the risks of independent adoptive placements and making better understood the safeguards afforded by qualified child welfare agencies. Likewise, the material written for the social work and other professions has focused, and rightfully so, on adoption placement, on the responsibility, policies, and methods of agencies, both private and public, that place children for adoption. Ultimately the solution to the problem of offering all adopted children essential safeguards will rest with the agencies placing children.

In the meantime, in the year of 1950 it is estimated that only a third of all adoption placements were made by qualified child welfare agencies. The other two thirds represent independent adoptions where

no investigation was made prior to placement.* In a majority of the states the state welfare departments, under provisions of modern adoption laws, investigate independent adoptions at the time the petition for legal adoption is filed.‡ But despite the fact that this responsibility involves two thirds of all the adoptions today, there is a dearth of written material on the subject.

Early articles regarding modern adoption laws reflect a hopeful, if rather hazy, conception of having the provision for social investigation at the time of legal adoption serve as something of a substitute for the protection afforded through placement agencies.‡ Even recent articles refer to this investigation as being "a codification of the practice of authorized adoption agencies."§ Throughout there has been no clear distinction drawn between the responsibility for investigating independent adoptions at the time of legal adoption and the responsibility of agencies placing children for adoption.

No doubt it would be readily granted that the responsibility of selecting a permanent home for a child is somewhat different from that of investigating the home after the placement is made, but question can be raised as to how much clear thinking the profession has yet done as regards the differences and how they alter policies and procedures. Since the responsibility for investigating adoptions at the time of petition for legal adoption is one that now affects such a large number of children, it seems highly important

* Presented at CWLA Southern Regional Conference at Biloxi, Mississippi, February, 1951.

[Author's Note:

The term "adoption petitions" is being used to make it clear that the responsibility discussed in this paper is that of investigation of independent adoptive placements at the time of petition for legal adoption. The terms "independent adoption" and "independent adoptive placements" refer to adoptions where the placement was made without the aid of an authorized agency.]

† Thayer, "Moppets on the Market: The Problem of Unregulated Adoptions," Reprint from the *Yale Law Journal*, Issue of March, 1950, p. 716.

* Katharine F. Lenroot, Statement made in the Foreword of "Adoption in New York City," a Report of the New York City Committee on Adoption.

‡ Although a few adoption laws require or permit referral of adoption petitions where the child was placed independently to qualified placement agencies for investigation and recommendation, since the majority place this responsibility with the state welfare department, the focus of this paper is the responsibility as carried by the state welfare departments.

§ Potter, "Implications of the New Adoption Law," Child Welfare League of America, February, 1940.

§ Thayer, *op. cit.*, p. 729.

that there be clear understanding of and agreement within the profession on certain fundamentals in respect to this responsibility.

In attempting to analyze the responsibility of state departments in relation to investigation of adoption petitions, some of the reasons for lack of clarity seem to warrant consideration.

First, the responsibility of state welfare departments for investigating independent adoptions is relatively new, and represents a decided change in the feeling of responsibility toward adopted children. While the first law requiring social investigation of adoption petitions was passed in 1917 in Minnesota, only a few states followed suit immediately. This is not surprising when it is recalled that in 1917 some northeastern children's societies were still sending children in groups to midwestern states for foster home placement. Newspaper advertisements of the presentation of two dozen orphaned children to be staged at the Opera House were still appearing. It is true that by this time, for various reasons, not so many children were available for such distribution as heretofore. Write-ups of the stagings had begun to reflect more questioning of applicants, until finally one write-up quoted a person in the audience as saying in surprise, "Why, so frequent were the refusals, that many began to realize that instead of conferring a favor, a favor was granted to those who were so fortunate as to receive a child."* Perhaps this remark reflected the turning point. But even so, in 1938 there were still only ten states that required, by law, social investigation of independent adoptions.† Today, just 13 years later, 35 states and the District of Columbia make social investigation mandatory.‡ Therefore, in about two thirds of the states this responsibility is a newly acquired one.

Adoption Laws May Not Mirror Public Opinion

Another reason for lack of clarity is no doubt the rather complicated and conflicting attitudes of the general public regarding adoption. Not too long ago people were being urged to take in so-called "orphaned" children and only 30 or 40 years ago did any questions begin to be asked. Also, adoption of children is something that touches on many underlying feelings and the interest aroused is frequently more emotional than objective, more sentimental than thoughtful. Thus, while such a large number of states enacted

so-called "model" adoption laws* in a very short span of time, this should not be taken to mean wholehearted public acceptance, and certainly not general agreement as to what was expected of the public agency to whom responsibility for investigating adoption petitions was delegated. Moreover, many of the model adoption laws were sponsored by special committees, usually composed of leaders in the social work field allied with a few informed and farsighted citizens. Their vigorous support, resulting in passage of the laws, does not necessarily reflect a marked over-all change in public opinion. As a principle and in the abstract, people agree that adopted children should be afforded every protection, but at the same time the notion still prevails that the offer to adopt a child is something intrinsically fine, stemming from unquestionably charitable, altruistic impulses, and that such an offer should not be subjected to too close inquiry.

But the main reason for lack of clarity seems to be the failure, to date, to analyze carefully what is involved in the responsibility for investigation of independent adoptions at the time of petition for legal adoption and to determine more specifically what can and what cannot be accomplished through this.

In the 1930's and early 1940's, the period when most modern adoption laws were enacted, it seems that it was rather generally thought that provision for social investigation at the time of petition for legal adoption, though belated, should provide a means of preventing at least a majority of the unsuitable or questionable adoptions. Consequently, the responsibility was apparently the relatively clear-cut one of investigating, and, if the proposed adoption was found to be unsuitable, advising the court against permitting the adoption. This initial conception that prevention of unsuitable adoptions on a case-by-case basis was the primary, if not the sole, responsibility resting with the state department, is well illustrated by the fact that, while reports to the court on unfavorable adoptions were usually fairly explicit as to the reasons, specific reasons for favorable recommendations were rarely given and hearings were attended only when the adoption was being questioned.† In addition to the responsibility of preventing so-called "unsuitable" adoptions, there is indication that there was some hope that these social investigations might offer children placed independently something of the same safeguards afforded children placed by agencies. Therefore most state

* Abbott, *The Child and the State*, Vol. II, pp. 143-151.

† Colby, *Problems and Procedures in Adoption*, U.S. Children's Bureau Pub. 262, p. 2.

‡ Leavy, *Law of Adoption Simplified*, Oceana Publications, 1948.

* [Author's Note:

The terms "model" or "modern" adoption laws are used in reference to laws which, along with other protective provisions, provide for social investigation of adoption petitions.]

† Colby, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

departments, and understandably so, drew heavily on adoption placement agencies in establishing policies and procedures.

Methods Patterned After Placement Agencies

How could these children who had been placed independently be given a measure of the protections placement agencies afforded their children? For the most part, during the initial stages of administration of adoption laws, the standards by which the adoptability of the child, and the criteria by which the suitability of proposed adoptive parents, were judged, were lifted quite directly from standards used by placement agencies in selecting a home for a particular child. Methods of investigation were patterned closely after those of the placement agencies. In 1941, a study published by the Children's Bureau showed that approximately half of all investigations of adoption petitions were made by state office staff, and in most states where the responsibility was delegated, attempt was made to have the work done by trained workers.* Although even in the beginning there was some verbal recognition that the child's being in the home made a difference, the Children's Bureau study revealed a striking tendency to attempt to apply placement agency criteria, with little or no adaptation in terms of positive and constructive aspects of the relationships that had been established between the children and the adoptive parents involved, or other realities. Several examples could be given, but possibly one of the most illustrative is that of state departments disapproving adoptions on the basis of undesirable family background of children, although the children in these cases had been in the homes several years, the adoptive parents were devoted to them, and with knowledge of the background were willing to take the risk of adoption.†

What kinds of ties of affection are sufficient to offset certain emotional characteristics of the adoptive parents that would be questioned by an agency selecting adoptive parents? What of the situation where the one-year-old child's development and adjustment to date are excellent, but personality and attitudes of the adoptive parents foretell the possibility of difficulties when he reaches adolescence? All in all, with so little guide for weighing and evaluating these already existing placements,‡ and with so much emphasis on the investigation being something of a belated substitute for protections afforded by placement agencies, the tendency to fall back on place-

ment agency criteria is not surprising. While there was much variation between states in respect to outright recommendations of disapproval of adoptions to the courts, usually the department's own evaluation of the adoption was based largely on placement agency criteria per se.

It was the discovery of the court's reluctance to deny adoptions, except in cases where many negative factors make the adoption clearly undesirable that shed an early shadow of doubt on the hope that such investigations could prevent all questionable adoptions.

Place for Interpretation to Court

As has been pointed out, initially most state departments made very little effort to interpret—perhaps because of uncertainty; perhaps because of an underlying hope that courts were really turning the social aspects of adoption over to the state department and would readily accept its evaluation and judgment. When it became rather evident that this was not the case, more emphasis was placed on interpretation. The report to the court was pointed to as a means of supplying the judge with information so interpreted as to help him understand the basis of the social agency's evaluation, and, further, as a means of "giving the courts a clear understanding of the social problems involved in adoption and of the underlying elements in family situations that contribute to or jeopardize the welfare of the child."*

Certainly interpretation of this kind is important, and in the long run should pay high dividends, but these cannot be realized immediately. Protection of children, safeguarding their best interests and welfare, has long been a responsibility of the court, which could not have been carried without definite concepts in respect to the needs of children. While a few judges may have treated this responsibility lightly, most judges were conscientious about it and could not be expected to change their concepts overnight. Even those who agree to a large extent with social work concepts as to the needs of children were almost without exception reluctant to uproot a child without clear evidence that the home is more damaging than the consequences of removal. In addition, the judge sitting on the bench is governed to a certain extent by rules of evidence, by weight of opinion.

Lack of Authority Discouraging

Since state departments to a certain extent continued to cling to the thought that their primary responsibility was the prevention of questionable

* Colby, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 103-107.

‡ The only specific suggestions in this regard found are in the section on Desirability of the Adoption, pp. 77-78, Colby, *op. cit.*

* Colby, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

adoptions on a case-by-case basis, the workers investigating adoption petitions, and the supervisory and administrative staff, tended to measure the accomplishment of the program in terms of whether or not children were being adopted by families who would have been selected by placement agencies. Instances where intangible emotional factors could not be sufficiently substantiated to recommend dismissal of the adoption, instances where the court failed to concur with negative recommendations, represented failures. Each of these raised further doubt that the program was accomplishing the desired end.

As the full implications of the attempt to prevent undesirable or questionable adoptions of children already in the home were grasped, as there came to be more realization that investigations at the time of petition could not afford these children protection in a way comparable to that of placement agencies, there was definite discouragement. If investigation was preventing questionable adoptions in only a few cases, what was its value? There was a definite tendency to label the responsibility for investigation of such adoption petitions as hollow and meaningless, to look upon this responsibility as a fruitless routine worthy of a minimum of attention. This led to rather half-hearted and pessimistic administration in some states.

But before accepting this point of view, state departments charged with the administration of these programs, as well as all agencies interested in the protection of adopted children, must re-examine the responsibility for investigating adoption petitions. Perhaps the interpretation of this responsibility has not been wholly accurate; perhaps there has not been enough distinction between this responsibility and that of the adoption placement agency; perhaps the assumption that the primary goal was to offer these children protection comparable to that offered by placement agencies has been misunderstood and therefore prevented recognition of the real issues involved.

It would seem that the responsibility of state departments for investigation of adoption petitions is much broader at this point than so-called full protection to each individual child, broader than protection for children in independent adoptive homes today—that it extends to the child of tomorrow and the next day.

If state departments can set aside any remnants of the original hopeful, but not realistic, idea that investigation after placement must be a service similar to that offered by placement agencies, departments may be able to see the task as worth while and carry the responsibility more comfortably.

Distinction Between These Services

The placement agency's responsibility for the child it places is a much more complete responsibility. It actually selects the home for the child and, if the placement does not work out satisfactorily, is in a position to remove the child before court action for legalization of adoption. Since the placement agency is choosing a home, the criterion can and should be the home that is best for the child from those available at the time of placement. The placement agency need not place a child in a home that does not promise a satisfactory adjustment for the child. Another distinction is that the placement agency in selecting a home has the responsibility of knowing prospective adoptive parents and child well enough to make an initial judgment as to how they will act in a situation that does not yet exist. Although the placement agency does not give final approval for legal adoption until after a period of supervision, it must surmise how people will function as parents, and the methods and procedures used must be ones that will enable it to accomplish this.

In contrast, a state department in investigating an adoption petition has less complete responsibility. The state department is not selecting a home, but rather is investigating a home where the child is living, a family who have come to have a meaning for the child, and vice versa. Even with a baby, certain relationships have been established which may offset some questionable factors. Further, while the placement agency's decision to reject an adoption application can be final as far as that agency is concerned, the state department's disapproval of an adoption petition is merely advice to the court, and responsibility for the final decision rests with the court.

All in all, the fact that the placement already exists makes for a good deal of difference. We may be satisfied ourselves, and may convince others, that certain factors are sufficiently questionable to justify not placing a child with a particular family, whereas the same factors would not warrant removal of a child once the placement has been made and a relationship established. For example, the placement agency is justified in selecting for an infant adoptive parents who are in their 30's; the state department is not justified in recommending against the adoption of an infant by a couple in their 40's. Certainly social workers believe it best that a child be adopted by people whose background is similar, whose mental capacities are comparable to his potentialities, yet it is doubtful that there is sufficient proof that these are essential for the child's normal development, that uprooting the child could be justified. Sometimes surprisingly positive and constructive elements are

found in the relationship between the adoptive parents and child in spite of emotional factors that might have justified a placement agency's not selecting the family.

State departments have had to develop certain guides for their own use, and no doubt have based these on some standards of what is acceptable care and what can be considered sufficiently acceptable relationships between the adoptive parents and the child. However, no criteria specifically applicable to the prospective adoptive home where the child is already a member of the family seem to have been agreed upon. Nor has specific consideration been given to just how much deviation from placement agency criteria is justified on the basis of bonds of affection, on the basis of "today's" satisfactory adjustment of the child. Nothing has been written in recent years on how this deviation can best be interpreted to the courts, how it can be interpreted in a way that will not be subject to the criticism of being "idealistic," but will develop more understanding of sound adoption practices.

There is also need for more understanding of procedure. Exploring with prospective adoptive parents their possible potentialities as parents is different from investigating people who have not sought the assistance of an agency and who are already acting as adoptive parents. The skills, the techniques, are different. But no studied consideration seems to have been given to the basic psychological differences that are found, from the standpoint of the adoptive parents, the child and the worker, in an already existing placement.

As state departments comprehend fully the fact that investigation of adoption petitions has validity although the service is not comparable to that offered by the placement agency, the feeling of frustration should diminish and there should be freedom to set about formulating criteria that are most specifically applicable to this job, and developing methods and procedures that are feasible, sound and practical.

State Department Has Broader Responsibility

Bearing in mind the distinct differences between the responsibility of the placement agency and that of the state department, we can move ahead to consideration of the broader responsibilities that rest with the state department. While many questionable adoptions cannot now be prevented, the way this job is done will determine what can be accomplished for the child of tomorrow.

In many states between 500 and 1,000, in some states several thousand, adoption petitions are han-

dled each year. This many adoptive parents have secured a child, this many parents have relinquished a child, this many children have entered into the experience of adoption, without the benefits attributed to social agency services. For the most part these are the people, the parents and the adoptive parents, who for one reason or another have not been convinced of the necessity or even the advantages of social services in relation to adoption. These are the people social agencies have not "sold." They represent the potential applicant for service from the social agency of tomorrow.

How are they different from, how are they like the people who utilize social agency services today? How did the parents go about releasing their child? the adoptive parents, securing the child? Why? How is adoption working for the parents, the adoptive parents, the child? What damages are actually occurring? Studies of placements made by agencies have proved that a very high percentage of these placements work out satisfactorily, but this alone does not conversely prove the dangers of independently arranged adoptions.

Adoption placement agencies and social agencies serving unmarried mothers know why the people who come to them use their service, but they cannot be sure why the people who did not come failed to do so. Agencies know the characteristics of the people who use their services, their marital status, their ages, etc. Programs have been geared to these people, interpretation directed to them. And while agencies are not in a position to know the characteristics of the people who do not use their services, state departments studying adoption petitions are in a position to know. If agencies are to place all children for adoption, they must first reach the parents who are not placing children through them. What percentage are actually unmarried mothers? Where are they from? What is the general educational level? The most usual occupations? Who arranged the placement? Much information is needed about the adoptive parents who are not seeking children through social agencies.

The state department's investigation of independently arranged adoptions provides a wealth of such information. It puts the state departments in a position to understand the scope and nature of the problem, to see what kinds of services are needed, to help other social agencies evaluate the soundness of their policies and procedures to determine whether there are some that cannot be justified on the basis of real safeguards for the child; to see whether there are elements about programs that are not compatible with the needs and wishes of parents and adoptive parents; and to decide if there is necessity or justification for

change. State departments are in the position of knowing what is happening in independent adoptions. Facts are available to be used in state-wide planning, to be shared with other agencies, to be placed for consideration before other professions (particularly the medical and legal professions) and before the public. This is a highly important aspect of the state department's responsibility for investigation of adoption petitions—a broad, far-reaching aspect.

Opportunity for Public Relations Job

If 500 to 1,000 adoption petitions are investigated each year in a single state, that state department is considering adoption with 500 to 1,000 adoptive parents, with almost as many parents who have placed their children, with possibly twice as many people who are consulted as references, and with hundreds of doctors. This affords definite opportunity for developing fuller understanding of the social aspects of adoptions. The approach, if it is to accomplish real understanding, cannot be one of "preaching" good adoption practice. Routine interpretation of good adoption placement practice conscientiously woven into each case may fall far short of the mark. In adoption, something about which there is still so much conflicted feeling, the old principle of "beginning by accepting people at the point at which they are" seems particularly sound. Real understanding comes gradually, and the approach must be one of helping people to see what is involved in adoption and thus become convinced of the reasons for safeguards. The development of more understanding of adoption can lead to better understanding of the needs not only of adopted children but of all children, can lead to more support for all programs relating to children. It is the responsibility of the state departments to be sure that policies and procedures, the whole plan of administration, take into full and accurate account these broad implications.

Certainly there are few, if any, programs that afford as much opportunity for working with members of the legal profession and those in judicial positions. The opportunity is there to develop more understanding of the social aspects of adoption, but even more important, to develop more understanding between law and social work regarding the responsibilities and contributions of each. What can be accomplished in the field of adoption depends to a large extent on this understanding. Furthermore, since lawyers predominate in the make-up of legislative bodies, all welfare programs and services are influenced by the legal profession's conception of the profession of social work and evaluation of our practices. The legal profession's confidence, not only in our aims, but in our methods, is essential.

If social work is to gain the respect of the legal profession, it must demonstrate an ability to see clearly its own responsibility and area of functioning and those of other professions. Exaggeration of our own responsibilities indicates a narrow scope of vision; lack of appreciation of the obstacles that confront the court as well as the social worker in reaching

sound decisions on these cases does not speak well of the profession. An attitude that the state department's recommendations on independent adoptions are, or should be, the deciding ones, and that the function of the courts is to rubber-stamp these findings, is not only erroneous, but a marked exaggeration.* Even though there is not yet agreement in respect to solutions, failure to realize that many attorneys and judges are as concerned as we are about some of the things they see happening in these adoptions belittles the legal profession and stands in the way of ultimate agreement.

Must Fit Concepts into Legal Proceeding

If the social work profession is to gain the confidence of attorneys and judges, it is essential that we be realistic in respect to the task before us. If the state department merely advises that a family is not suitable, passing lightly over the fact that the child is already in the home, it is not only being unrealistic, but is making little contribution, and in fact is leaving the most difficult aspect of the evaluation to the judge. It is also essential that advice be based as nearly as possible on established facts and knowledge that have been sufficiently substantiated to warrant consideration in a court of law. It behooves social work to join with attorneys and judges in attempting to find the best ways of fitting social agency findings and opinions into a legal proceeding. Social work is a new science and, further, not an exact science. Certain theories have been well enough established to authorize reference to them; others have not. This does not mean unproved theory should be left locked tightly in office desks, but sound discretion in the use of theory is particularly important when the social work profession is working with a profession trained in the school of "proof," when it has entered into the sphere of the court, which is charged with responsibility for basing its decisions on "established facts" or "sound and defensible opinion."

While it is essential that the social work profession recognize the limitations that confront state departments and the courts in this particular task, it is highly important that the great opportunity this joint endeavor affords not be overlooked. With attorneys and judges, state departments throughout the country are looking at possibly as many as 50,000 independent adoptions each year, are sharing findings and knowledge, evaluation and views, theory and philosophy—all to the possible end of discovering ways and means of affording children better protection. While it is evident that state departments through the responsibility for investigating adoption petitions cannot afford these children the fullest protection—not the protection good placement agency services can offer—the state departments' responsibility is broad and far-reaching. It extends to the child of tomorrow—the next generation of adoptive children.

* Fife, "The Social Worker and Attorney in Adoption Cases," *Public Welfare in Indiana*, December, 1950.

WHAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE CAN OFFER CHILDREN EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH CHILD-CARING INSTITUTIONS*

HOW many times have you been faced with such a knotty problem about a child you have been working with that you did not know where to turn nor what to do? No doubt most of us have had this experience. I have been asked to discuss what the state department of public welfare can offer to a child either directly or through a child-caring institution. This involves the state's responsibility for strengthening services to all children; how this is done through direct services to children and through indirect services. [There should be a comprehensive plan.] We who have been working with children have been conscious of a changing emphasis from child welfare service to a broad program of public welfare services. We are concerned about adequate service to all children and about community planning which will provide for family security, basic necessities, and satisfactory living. Essentials for this are: 1. A comprehensive long-range plan. 2. A sound underlying philosophy. 3. Accepted standards of child care and protection.

In order to accomplish these goals a state needs to look at its laws. To assure a sound administration, the laws should be broad and flexible, definite in provision and extent of jurisdiction, with the definition within the law clearly understood. A first responsibility of the state with adequate laws is sound administrative policies and practices. In reality the law is administered by our standards and policies. The development of standards and goals should be a co-operative experience, as it was in North Carolina where the state department met in conference with the county units to decide what goals they should work toward, such as no children being held in jail, every county with at least one licensed boarding home, and so on. These goals are reviewed annually and a report made to the North Carolina State Department through the field staff.

Another responsibility of the state agency for the welfare of all children is that of public relations. Through its knowledge of state-wide needs, resources, and interagency relationships, the state agency is aware of problems affecting children, and has a responsibility for arousing state-wide consciousness of these problems. Leadership in this in North Carolina is assumed by the administrator. An example of this is the personal guardianship bill now before the State Legislature. The state's responsibility for protecting children was so strongly felt and emphasized through our work with children that one child-caring institution made a survey of its population to determine guardianship status. As the need became apparent, the Commissioner of Public Welfare, through interpretation to both professional and lay groups, aroused a state-wide consciousness of this problem.

* Presented as part of a panel discussion on "Services to Children in Institutions" at CWLA Southern Regional Conference, Biloxi, Mississippi, February, 1951.

Through its Committee on Children and Youth, the North Carolina Conference for Social Service published two booklets on guardianship, one for lay people and one for professional people, supplementing the bill now before the legislature. This gives all interested groups a feeling of belonging to a broad and comprehensive program for children.

Closely related to public relations is the development and the use of statistical and research material. The State Department of Public Welfare, because of its broad program, is uniquely fitted to render this service. The state's concern for children in child-caring institutions may be illustrated by the part played by statistics and research in helping one institution to change its function. Instead of rendering a service to the dependent child, its discerning board of directors decided to offer services to a specialized group. Another example of the state's use of statistics is an active file containing a card for every child in an institution, with the county department feeling a responsibility to work with the family and the institution as long as the child is in the orphanage. This is quite different from the old practice of putting a child in an orphanage, closing the case, and no longer feeling any responsibility for the child or its family.

Another responsibility the state has is that of providing publicity and information to stimulate interest in the community in sound planning of programs for children. The importance of good relations with public and private agencies cannot be stressed too strongly.

Direct services to children will vary in the states. In North Carolina there are only three so-called direct services to children. The State Boarding Home Fund is appropriated to be used on a matching basis by the County Department of Public Welfare for boarding the dependent, neglected, delinquent, or handicapped child in licensed boarding homes. This we refer to as direct care because of participation in the cost of care. The national trend in this type of care has increased 25% during the past five years. The other two direct services are psychological and psychiatric; the representative of the state department actually examines the individuals referred and occasionally interviews parents. In another respect, of course, this is a service to the County Department of Public Welfare, similar to many other instances of helping the county with services to children. It is important to realize that as we strengthen services to all children, the child in the institution profits; but the state department does not work directly with the child in the institution. Instead, it works with the superintendent by supervision of standards and supervisory conferences in the areas in which he needs help and guidance. An illustration of this was the child-caring institution that asked the state department to work with it on its guardianship study.

Another service to institutions is that of consultation. We need to bear in mind the difference between supervision and consultation; supervision carries an element of authority. In consultation the superintendent consults with the state department, but the final decision rests with the superintendent. Through consultation the state department brings to the in-

stitutions what is considered good practice not only in its own state but in the region, expressing the state's position on certain questions in the hope that the superintendent will feel disposed to follow, though this is not mandatory. One of the most controversial issues on which many hours have been spent in consultation is that of the use of casework services, defining the areas in which the caseworker and the house parent function, and how to use casework services provided by an outside agency. Another indirect service is that of advisory assistance. For instance, recently a child-caring institution embarking on a half-million-dollar building program asked for help from the state department, which had the responsibility of advising this institution where it could look for help. It also had some ideas of its own as to what was a good building program for an institution. It is important to develop good relationships with private and public agencies; otherwise the job is only partly done. When private agencies and public agencies work together, it is like ten thousand horsemen all pulling together to make a better world in which children may grow up. In order to effect this teamwork, interagency relationships become paramount. The state has responsibility for guidance in this area by helping each agency define its role and adhere to it. To do this, an agency must know the area of greatest need and it must also know the area in which it is best equipped to serve.

Some other points on which the state department must focus careful consideration, in order to help institutions give better service to children, are:

1. The referral and intake process.
2. Authority.
3. Full participation by the parent.
4. Family relationship.
5. Trained personnel.
6. Community and interagency responsibility.

We must avoid any tendency to separate or isolate any service in the program, as this is unsound. We must have a strong conviction that there are distinct needs of different groups to be served, and that services to meet them must be more clearly analyzed and identified, so that special skills and techniques can be developed and there can be more effective use of staff.

We can summarize the state's responsibility for children in child-caring institutions by recognizing that the state has responsibility for safeguarding children cared for away from their own homes, which includes the group we are concerned with here. We can see how this came about if we examine the recommendations of previous White House Conferences. The White House Conference of 1909 concluded, "It is a sound public policy that the state through its duly authorized representative should inspect the work of all agencies which care for children." By 1919 the White House Conference resolved, "The State Board of Charities should be responsible for regulations, inspection, and licensing of every institution or agency caring for children." By 1930, "supervision and standards" were added. The Conference recommended "through a Welfare Department the State should maintain effective supervision over all institu-

tions and agencies having the care of children and set up standards." By the 1940 White House Conference it was found that the state could not do the job alone, that it took more than just the law or the inspection. The Conference recommended, "The enforcement of laws relating to supervision of institutions isn't enough. Therefore, the State should encourage participation by child-caring institutions in the developing of standards and services." The 1950 Midcentury White House Conference added still another, "that one department working with other departments set up all-inclusive minimum standards." Here is integration and interagency cooperation. From the grass roots, the lay groups, and the professional groups that have met together for half a century in White House Conferences, the state department has obtained its directive. The state department is a servant of the public, contrary to the thinking of some people that regulations are forced on them from above by the state. Therefore, community planning must enter into the philosophy of the state, private, and local agencies. Let us resolve now that we will build courageously, imaginatively, ungrudgingly, and without discrimination, services which will reach out to all our children and youth. Our greatest chance for a lasting peace lies not with us, but with them.

LOUISE L. BLAKE

*Supervisor of Children's Institutions
North Carolina State Board of Public Welfare*

NEW LEAGUE PUBLICATIONS

Four new pamphlets have just been added to the League's list of publications: "Inside the Day Care Center," by Winifred A. Moore and Alfreda Yeomans, price \$.50; "A Statement of Principles and Policies on Public Child Welfare," price \$.25; "A Guide for the Development of Day Care Programs," price \$.75; and "Bibliography on Residential Treatment Centers," price \$.35. As for all League pamphlets, mimeographed booklets and special information bulletins, a discount of 10% will be given on quantities of 10 or more copies.

New League Member

Children's Division
State Department of Social Welfare
610 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence 8, Rhode Island
Lawrence C. Cole, Administrator

New Provisional

The Jewish Family and Children's Service
2218 North Third Street
Milwaukee 12, Wisconsin
Miss Rebecca B. Tenenbaum, Executive Director

A TIME STUDY OF HOMEFINDING

What is the cost of an agency's homefinding program? This statement of one agency's experience is offered as a basis for further analysis and discussion.

The homefinder of the Children's Aid and S.P.C.C. of Buffalo and Erie County, N. Y., did a time study in March, 1951, covering that entire month, for the purpose of helping us to break down what goes into the different aspects of homefinding, how much time goes into each part of it, and how many homes a homefinder may be expected to have studied when the same homefinder handles recruiting and all applications and inquiries regarding foster family care.

March was a typical month except from two aspects: we had only 25 applications and inquiries as opposed to an average of 44 per month in 1950, and there was more recruitment activity in terms of personal contacts, especially with clergymen.

The summary of the time record is as follows:

5 Home studies completed (new)	83 hrs. 5 min.
a. Office interviews	4 hrs. 45 min.
b. Home calls (min. of 3 per home)	20 hrs. 10 min.
c. References	10 hrs. 20 min.
d. Preparation for interviews	5 hrs. 40 min.
e. Dictation	23 hrs.
f. Transportation	19 hrs. 10 min.

83 hrs. 5 min.

Average time spent per home... 16 hrs. 37 min.

Application interviews on the above 5 homes in February averaged... 37 min.

Total average time to study a home... 17 hrs. 14 min.

One old home was reviewed in March and time spent was as follows:

a. Office interview	15 min.
b. Home calls	1 hr. 45 min.
c. References	
d. Preparation for interviews	65 min.
e. Dictation	1 hr. 35 min.
f. Transportation	2 hrs.

6 hrs. 40 min.

5 Partial home studies... 13 hrs. 50 min.

Total time during month spent in study of homes 103 hrs. 35 min.

The remainder of the 158 working hours were spent as follows:

25 Applications and Inquiries (including 2 hr. and 35 min. dictation)	16 hrs. 25 min.
Recruitment (1 speech and 2 hrs. of transportation included)	14 hrs. 30 min.
Agency's meetings and preparation for one	4 hrs. 25 min.
Reports and Administrative details	9 hrs. 30 min.
Agency conferences	4 hrs. 25 min.
Miscellaneous	3 hrs.

Total time accounted for... 155 hrs. 50 min.

Not accounted for... 2 hrs. 10 min.

(largely waiting for records, putting through phone calls, interruptions by unscheduled staff visits, etc.)

There are several points of considerable interest in the analysis of the above. One is that during the months that the homefinder receives the average number of applications and inquiries, she will spend on them the amount of time needed to study a home. If she receives 75 to 80 applications and inquiries, we can expect the production of one less home than she produced in March. The number of homes to be expected will be affected also by the amount of time spent on recruitment. The motives of applicants and the location of their homes affect the time it takes to study them and consequently the number of homes studied. The last is also affected by withdrawals or necessary refusal by the agency after considerable work has gone into the study.

We receive a large number of requests for a foster child to be a companion to an own child. Unless the applicant can move from that to a desire to serve the foster child for himself, we cannot use the home and in such applications more time may go into the study. That and other factors that can affect the time involved in a home study show up in the 5 new homes completed in March as shown below.

It is hoped that the time required for dictation of home studies can be reduced. In the figures shown, it will be noted that the two homes that presented difficult questions (Homes A and D) took almost twice as much time to dictate as did the others, approximately 21 hours each for the whole job as opposed to about 13 hours each for the other three homes.

We feel that the homefinder's production in March was a peak production. For one thing, when a time study is being made, any worker is more aware of time and seeks not to waste a minute. From this study we may expect an average of 4 homes per month, with variations in the number depending upon changes in time required for recruitment and the number of applications and inquiries.

An article* on a method of arriving at a caseload figure states that 12 hours per month seems to be sufficient to complete a study, but this is done by a caseworker who carries other casework responsibilities. That agency also averaged two office interviews—one with the foster mother and one with both foster parents. We are finding it impractical to insist upon the foster father coming to the office, as the majority of our foster fathers are farmers or city workers who live in the country, and the inconvenience to them if we insist upon an office interview constitutes a

* "Method of Arriving at a Case Load Figure," by Verne Weed, CWLA Bulletin, May, 1945.

	Office Interviews	Home	References	Transportation	Dictation	Preparation for Interviews	Totals
Family A; Suburban area							
Foster father's personality was puzzling	20"	4' 30"	3' 20"	5' 20"	6' 35"	1' 40"	21' 5"
Family B; Village							
Not complicated	20"	3' 55"	1' 35"	3' 50"	3' 10"	50"	13' 40"
Family C; City	50"	3' 25"	1' 35"	1' 55"	3' 30"	1' 35"	12' 40"
Family D; Village							
Asked for companion for own child	1' 35"	5' 30"	2' 30"	4' 45"	6' 10"	45"	21' 15"
Family E; City	1' 40"	2' 50"	1' 30"	3' 20"	3' 35"	50"	13' 45"
Totals	4' 45"	20' 10"	10' 20"	19' 10"	23'	5' 40"	83' 5"

threat to securing a home or prolongs the study. Some agencies reduce the time in studying homes by the use of telephone calls to references, and some use letters for references. We feel that such letters are generally without value, and are opposed to consulting references by telephone for the same reason as well as for others.

LUCIE K. BROWNING

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FIRST ANNUAL MARY E. BORETZ AWARDS GIVEN

THE Child Welfare League of America is deeply grateful to be able to announce that the plan to offer two Mary E. Boretz Awards for 1951 was realized. The presentations were made at the annual dinner of the Child Welfare League held in Atlantic City. It is gratifying that although the announcement was made only in January of this year, by April a sufficient number of manuscripts had been presented for consideration that the judges felt completely satisfied that a choice could be made. Such organization is a tribute to the field of child welfare and to the judges.

The first award went to Mrs. Lucille T. Lewis, a supervisor of the Child Welfare Association of Atlanta, Georgia, for a paper entitled "What About Adoption For Me?," describing the problems of placing Negro children for adoption. In granting the award the committee said:

"By unanimous vote you are accorded first place in the 1951 Mary E. Boretz Award. Your vivid presentation of the need for effective adoption services in behalf of our Negro children commends itself to the attention of every organization and individual dedicated to the advance of child welfare in the United States. We are grateful for the clear, concise way in which you have analyzed this serious problem, and the deep feeling you show for the needs of children. In this wise you reflect the spirit of Mary E. Boretz, whose many years of devoted labor were directed toward safeguarding the best interests of all children."

The second award went to Mrs. Mary Holmes Gilmore, special consultant on children's institutions for the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare, for a paper on "Helping Children in Institutions." Her citation reads:

"In awarding you the second prize of the 1951 Mary E. Boretz Award, the judges see your paper as a scholarly addition to the field of child welfare. By making thoughtful application of sound group work experience to the programs of child care institutions, you have shown how casework and other services to children receiving institutional care can be enriched. This is a subject currently of great concern, and yours is indeed a timely contribution."

As had been announced originally, these awards will be offered annually for manuscripts dealing with community organization in child welfare, administration of child welfare agencies, supervision and casework practice, research studies in child welfare and casework services for children needing care in institutions or foster homes, adoption services, and

services for children in their own homes, day care or protective services. The authors are permitted to reserve book rights, while the League reserves the right to publish this material in manuscript or in its monthly publication, *CHILD WELFARE*.

We are setting the month of January, 1952, for receiving manuscripts for consideration for the award to be granted at the next National Conference.

The committee of judges set up the following criteria for the selection of award manuscripts:

1. The material must deal with subject matter in the field of child welfare. The award manuscript should, therefore, be of subject matter based on experience or research in child welfare agencies. It should be based on the writer's current or recent direct experience, not a record of someone else's experience.
2. The material should be timely, should be creative—that is, it should offer a new presentation, a new emphasis, some conclusions that are different and that will, therefore, be a significant contribution to the field of child welfare.
3. It should stay fairly well within the limits of four to six thousand words.

Five copies of each manuscript should be presented in order to expedite the reading of the material by the judges.

BOOK NOTES

THE CHOSEN BABY, by Valentina P. Wasson, ill. by Hildegard Woodward—Revised Edition. J. B. Lippincott Company, New York, 1950. 46 pp. \$2.50.

Workers in the adoption field will be greatly interested in the revision made by Dr. Wasson of her charming story of the adoption process. For this is a real story—which has been read over and over to adopted children at bedtime—about how they were "chosen."

We are told in the foreword by Miss Sophie Van S. Theis that the purpose of the revision is to modernize the illustrations and bring up to date adoption methods. This statement indeed arouses our interest in comparing the two editions and seeing what changes have taken place in our methods during the last eleven years.

Perhaps the most striking change is that we no longer look under beds during the home study. What a relief! How often has this concept of casework been thrown in our faces! Now our concern with environmental factors is focused on such things as where the baby will sleep and play. This certainly seems more sensible, even to the adopted child himself.

Another important change in our practice, we find, is that we do not burden prospective adoptive parents with the responsibility of picking out a child from among several candidates. The baby is still "chosen," but the process of selection and choice is a cooperative one between applicants and agency, without subjecting the applicants to possible feelings of guilt about picking one child and rejecting two others.

The original edition involved more than one caseworker in the adoption process. The revised edition

keeps Mrs. White (instead of the "Lady from the Home," by the way) as the agency representative clear through the total process, from the initial telephone call from the applicants through to the placement of the child, and even to the placement of the second child. We certainly can agree that involving more than one representative of the agency can be confusing to the child as well as to the adoptive parents.

We see healthier attitudes on the part of the "revised" adoptive parents. They are not as rigid in their preference for a boy as in the first edition. They also feel it is important for the first child to take a positive role in wanting a "baby sister," rather than selling him a decision they have already made.

The revised edition eliminates the "nice fat Nannie to help look after the baby." Although some adoptive parents can afford this kind of help, most cannot. Furthermore, we often wonder what the sharing of baby care with a maid does to the relationship between mother and child. The original edition gave "Peter" an ocean voyage to visit his grandparents. We are relieved that the grandparents now live conveniently near the seashore, involving a considerably less expensive and possibly less upsetting trip for such a young child.

Needless to say, the illustrations in *The Chosen Baby* are just as important as the text. They are full of life, warmth and special appeal to the preschool-age child. Interestingly enough, the illustrator, and not the author, has entered into the controversy over "early placement," perhaps quite unwittingly. The age of the infant in the revised edition is about eight or nine months at the time of placement (the child sits in a high chair). In the original edition the child was obviously younger. Many agencies which are moving in the direction of early placement (under three months) will not like this revision.

Adoption agencies are constantly asked by adoptive parents for material to help them interpret the adoption process to their children. We welcome the revision of *The Chosen Baby* as a valuable asset to the parent in helping his young adopted child to understand what "chosen" by adoption really means.

CHARLES B. OLDS

Executive Secretary, Children's Home Society, St. Paul, Minnesota

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HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD IN SCHOOL, by Mary and Lawrence K. Frank. Viking Press, New York. 1950. 368 pp. \$2.95.

Unlike some books whose titles promise much more than the books deliver, this one affords much more than the title seems to promise. It is basically a volume on the understanding of children from nursery age to 12 years of age: a more accurate title would be, *How to Understand Growing Children and Help Them at Home and in School*. It will be quite as helpful to teachers as to parents, and this reviewer wholeheartedly recommends it to both for its insights and many practical suggestions.

This is a "how to" book in the very best sense of that phrase. The understanding and guidance of children obviously can never be reduced to a simple set of "how to" rules. In the Franks' book the "how

to" suggestions are related to a genuine understanding of children's basic needs and drives at each stage of growth, and constitute helpful ways in which parents or teachers may prevent the development of serious problems or deal effectively with such problems if they have already arisen. There is an emphasis throughout on the very marked changes in children's needs as they grow from one age to another, and for each age group the varied needs of children at that stage of growth are discussed and suggestions offered.

The book deals sympathetically and understandingly, but not sentimentally, with teachers, parents and children. The authors are amazingly free from bias in the favor of any one of the three groups, which is just another way of saying that they genuinely understand children, parents and teachers. There is, throughout, recognition of the broad differences that exist between individuals in each group and between schools. While child needs and gradients in child growth are stressed as an essential focus in curriculum building and classroom management, children's needs for control, direction and psychologically sound discipline are equally well recognized. No particular philosophy of education is advocated. Nor is a case made for any one philosophy of child rearing. It is made clear that home and school cannot function independently and that both must adapt their viewpoints and methods to supplement each other in the interest of child growth and adjustment.

The book is written in a simple, flowing style with a marked preponderance of one-syllable Anglo-Saxon words. The illustrations of child behavior, of child conversation, at every stage of growth are so realistic and typical that every teacher and every parent who reads the book will again and again find himself saying, "That's my Johnny," or "That's my Sue."

The volume has very special value for teachers, housemothers and other workers in children's homes and institutions in which professional staff members have to play a combined role of parent, teacher and playground director. The discussion of children's emotional and social needs at each and every stage of growth and the many practical suggestions offered for satisfying these make it a *must* book for personnel of child-caring institutions and for those engaged in foster home care.

LUTHER E. WOODWARD, PH.D.

Coordinator, Community Mental Health Services
New York State Mental Health Commission

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DELINQUENCY CONTROL, by Lowell Julliard Carr. (Revised, 1950.) Harper & Brothers, New York. 1950. 591 pp. \$4.50.

Lowell Julliard Carr, who is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan, first brought out *Delinquency Control* in 1940, at which time it was immediately accepted as an authoritative and useful treatise on the techniques of delinquency prevention. Since its publication it has been accorded increasingly wide adoption for college courses and has been received equally well by those concerned with the problems of preventing delinquency in children.

The new edition is even better, and is a stimulating and practical presentation of the means for reducing

juvenile maladjustment by applying scientific research to the development of social action, implemented by social organization. Avoiding too much reliance on the efficacy of agency approaches, Professor Carr puts major emphasis where it belongs in any delinquency control program—on the community. The book presents the effect of World War II upon delinquency and considers methods of control utilized in other countries as well as in our own.

Community leadership is regarded as the key to delinquency control. Local government, public and private social work, the schools and the churches all have their part, but the approach must be coordi-

nated to meet the needs of the whole community, rather than being an individualized and fragmentary agency approach.

Likewise the community program must be based upon a sound scientific foundation of research which recognizes the new dynamic psychology, the massive role of ecological and cultural factors, and the new science of child psychology. Quantitative methods and rigorous scientific thinking must be applied to the evaluation of control programs, thus taking them out of the realm of guesswork.

FREDERIC M. THRASHER
Professor of Education, New York University

CLASSIFIED AD SERVICE

Insertion of five lines of six words each is made at the minimum rate of \$2.50. For each additional line, or a fraction thereof, the charge is 50 cents. Closing date is the eighth of the month prior to the month of issue. A check should accompany the order.

ADOPTION AGENCY has opening for field representative for resident position in Central Valley of California to work with unmarried mothers and adoptive families in four rural counties. Excellent supervision from, and close relations with, Los Angeles office. Completed professional education required. Child placing and adoption experience desirable. Write District Director, Children's Home Society of California, 3100 West Adams Blvd., Los Angeles 18, Calif.

SUPERVISOR for Child Care Division, full professional training. Casework experience with children preferred. Student training center. Expanding program including adoptions. Write Catholic Children's Aid Society, 67 Bond St., 2nd fl., Toronto 2, Ont., Canada.

CASEWORKER, professionally trained, opening in family-children's service agency. Salary range comparable with good agency practice. Information given upon inquiry. Write Director, Catholic Social Service Bureau, 478 Orange St., New Haven, Conn.

CASEWORKER interested in homefinding, intake, direct work with disturbed children. Salary range for graduate worker \$2700-\$3750 depending upon experience. Children's Service Bureau, 127 N. W. 2nd St., Miami, Fla.

GRADUATE CASEWORKER—Salary range \$262.34-\$397.34—to carry caseload of children in foster homes and in agency's experimental treatment units. Experience in work with children desirable. Excellent psychiatric consultation. Write Morris H. Price, Assistant Director, Jewish Children's Bureau, 231 S. Wells St., Chicago 4, Ill.

CASEWORKER, private multiple function child-placing agency. Reasonable caseloads and good personnel practices. Graduate social work training required. Salary range \$2800-\$3900, depending on training and experience. Member CWLA. Write Newell W. Ackerson, Children's Service League, 730 E. Vine St., Springfield, Ill.

CASEWORKER wanted in family and children's agency. Full professional training required. Experience in adoption and foster care preferred. Student training program. Good personnel practices. Salary \$2800-\$3750. Write United Family and Children's Society, 703 Watchung Ave., Plainfield, N. J.

CASEWORK SUPERVISOR, combined family and children's agency. Good salary and working conditions. Excellent personnel policies. Early opening. Write Family and Children's Service, 313 S. E. Second St., Evansville, Ind.

CASEWORKER, for merged family and children's agency. Good salary according to training and experience. Excellent supervision and personnel practices. Write Family and Children's Service, 313 S. E. Second St., Evansville, Ind.

SENIOR CASEWORKER, responsibility for stimulating boarding home applications, screening applicants, home studies, and development of educational program for foster parents. Iowa Children's Home Society, 206 Savings & Loan Bldg., Des Moines 9, Iowa.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY with responsibility for casework in private child placing agency with foster home care and adoption service. Caseload averaging between 20 and 30. Experienced social worker or one with graduate social work training required. Beginning salary \$3000. Write Mrs. Henry Bagg, 326 Appleton St., Holyoke, Mass.

QUALIFIED CASEWORKERS—Family counseling, child placement, institutional program. Applications invited from flexibly oriented caseworkers interested in contributing to development of modern casework methods—i.e., brief recording, brief and continued service counseling, accelerated supervisory program, including group supervision, etc. Salary according to experience and skill. Write Frank T. Greving, Brooklyn Bureau of Social Service and Children's Aid Society, 285 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn 17, N. Y.

CASEWORKER WANTED—Resident position in school for 100 boys, aged 9-15 years, from broken homes. Single person. One other caseworker employed. Apply stating qualifications to Director, Alledale School for Boys, Lake Villa, Ill.

CASEWORKER, professionally trained—opening in children's agency specializing in temporary foster home care. Salary range \$2950-\$3950. Write Miss Merle E. MacMahon, Windham Children's Service, 2112 Broadway, New York City 23, N. Y.

CASEWORKER AND SUPERVISOR—Skills in child welfare an advantage. Multiple service agency. Provisional member of CWLA and member of FSAA. Psychiatric consultation, student program, excellent help in developing supervisory skills available. Salary in accord with training and experience. An opportunity to participate in the continuing development of agency program. Write Family and Children's Bureau, 337 South High St., Columbus 15, Ohio.

CASEWORKER for child placement agency. Trained. Experience with foster care, unwed parents and adoptions preferred. CWLA member. Consulting psychiatrist. Close supervision and limited load. Student unit. Salary range \$2700-\$3900. Children's Bureau, 225 N. Jefferson St., Dayton, Ohio.

CASEWORKER for child placement agency offering primarily adoption and foster home services. Reasonable caseloads, good supervision. CWLA member. Also, **DISTRICT CASEWORKER** for branch office. Good salaries. Please write Vermont Children's Aid Society, 72 Hungerford Terrace, Burlington, Vt.

DIRECTOR for nondenominational home under Episcopal auspices providing maternity care for unmarried mothers in large eastern city. Should be mature person, not over middle-age, capable of providing casework service also. Challenging opportunity. Maintenance and satisfactory salary. Write full details to Mrs. Blanche F. Newman, 4550 Connecticut Ave., N. W., Washington, D. C.

A New League Service

The *Child Welfare Advisory Service* is a new service of the Child Welfare League of America.

For the first time, boards, executives and staffs of private and public agencies may get at minimum cost:

- Technical information and advice from the League's 30 years of experience.
- Tested answers to problems that most agencies struggle alone to solve.
- Guidance to better procedures in child care.

This advisory service is designed especially for agencies that may be ineligible or not ready for regular membership in the League. This service is also available to agencies interested in child care but not offering direct service to children. It provides 10 features:

1. Information and advice by correspondence. Questions on administrative or professional problems will be answered out of the best experience in the country.
2. A subscription to *CHILD WELFARE*, the authoritative monthly magazine of the Child Welfare League.
3. A subscription to *Child Welfare Newsbrief*, the League's new monthly report on significant developments in the field.
4. Special reports and studies in pamphlet form, covering such practical topics as costs of care, standards of practice and trends in service.
5. Priority (after League members) for League surveys and field consultation at actual cost.
6. Library service, through which books on child welfare may be borrowed from the League library for the cost of return postage.
7. Free case record exhibit service (normal charge, \$25), enabling the subscriber to use the League's selection of 100 case records for two weeks by paying shipping charges.
8. Publicity and public relations advice. The subscriber may submit annual reports and other material for evaluation.
9. Advice on administrative machinery. The League will evaluate by mail the agency's methods of administration, record-keeping, etc., suggesting improvements when needed.
10. Limited personnel service. Agencies may list vacancies in administrative and supervisory positions and the League will refer appropriate candidates when available. (Priority must be given, however, to League members.)

The cost is \$60 a year, payable in advance.

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